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14. ABSTRACT The coalition has been successful in defeating Islamists through military means; however, their numbers continue to stay strong because they have a successful recruiting program. This paper asserts that one reason Muslims continue to join the Jihad is because Islamist sympathizers are eventually convinced to take up the fight against the West. It is at the point of sympathizer recruitment this paper focuses to interrupt the circle of terrorism. By actively engaging those sympathetic to the Islamists' ideology, the Islamist sympathizers can be persuaded from joining the Jihad. Although there may be easier methods of eliminating Islamists, this one goes directly after the recruiting process. This approach requires a concerted effort by the interagency community engaging across the entire range of military operations (ROMO) to achieve lasting effects. The combatant commander (CCDR) must lead this process because he holds the responsibility for security and possesses the regional expertise to provide tailoring necessary to address differences in culture and social structure. This paper makes the following recommendations: 1. Establish a formal global religious leader outreach program to indirectly provide operational support to the CCDR; 2. Develop relationships between ambassadors and local religious leadership; 3. Add to operational doctrine religious assessment criteria to ascertain the possible impact an operation may have on the religious climate; 4. Add religious support to the SOCOM's staff; 5. CCDR reach back to SOCOM staff; 6. Expand the TSCP program; 7. Add religious awareness instruction to the military educational system.					
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**RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP:
INTERRUPTING JIHAD AT THE POINT OF RECRUITMENT**

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

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10 October 2006

Abstract

The coalition has been successful in defeating Islamists through military means; however, Islamist numbers continue to stay strong because they have a successful recruiting program. This paper asserts that one reason Muslims continue to join the Jihad is because Islamist sympathizers are eventually convinced to take up the fight against the West. It is at the point of sympathizer recruitment this paper focuses to interrupt the circle of terrorism. By actively engaging those sympathetic to the Islamists' ideology, the Islamist sympathizers can be persuaded from joining the Jihad. Although there may be easier methods of eliminating Islamists, this one goes directly after the recruiting process. This approach requires a concerted effort by the interagency community engaging across the entire range of military operations (ROMO) to achieve lasting effects. The combatant commander (CCDR) must lead this process because he holds the responsibility for security and possesses the regional expertise to provide tailoring necessary to address differences in culture and social structure.

This paper makes the following recommendations: 1. Establish a formal global religious leader outreach program to indirectly provide operational support to the CCDR; 2. Develop relationships between ambassadors and local religious leadership; 3. Add to operational doctrine religious assessment criteria to ascertain the possible impact an operation may have on the religious climate; 4. Add religious support to the SOCOM's staff; 5. CCDR reach back to SOCOM staff; 6. Expand the TSCP program; 7. Add religious awareness instruction to the military educational system.

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RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP: INTERRUPTING JIHAD AT THE POINT OF RECRUITMENT

INTRODUCTION

“Our first task is to prevent being defeated. We are engaged in a long war which will take all elements of national power in order to be victorious.”

RADM Bruce W. Clingan
Deputy Director of Operations, Central Command
April 2002 to May 2004

The attacks of 9/11 were a wakeup call for the U.S. Immediately following the attacks, America went after the perpetrators. Our pursuit of justice rapidly expanded throughout the world to hunt down and kill or remove those associated with terrorist activities. Utilizing rapid and severe kinetic responses, success has been achieved in killing or capturing many Islamists.¹ Unfortunately, five years later, the war has not gone as anticipated. The battle for Iraq has become a source for insurgent recruiting and serves as their training ground. Likewise, in Afghanistan, coalition disruption of the Taliban was remarkably successful. However, the fighting persists and current reports indicate the Taliban are attempting to reassert control. With overwhelming success on the ground, why has the coalition been unsuccessful eliminating the Islamists? One reason is the enemy's ability to convince Muslims to die for the Islamists call to wage holy war against the Western world.

Research indicates the number of Islamists range anywhere from two hundred to two thousand.² The majority of 1.5 billion Muslims worldwide do not support the Islamists cause; however, about 500 million sympathizers exist and this number is growing.³ It is at

¹ For this paper, the term Islamists refers to the group of individuals who are willing to commit a terrorist act in the name of Jihad, or holy war, including al Qaeda and Associated Movements (AQAM).

² Richard Clark and Glenn Aga, *Defeating the Jihadists: A Blueprint for Action* (New York: Century Foundation Press, 2004), 17.

³ Ibid, 17.

the point of sympathizer recruitment this paper focuses to interrupt the circle of terrorism.⁴ Referred to as Islamists sympathizers, these Muslims are susceptible to moving from sympathy to support or, even worse, action. By actively engaging those sympathetic to the Islamists' ideology, the Islamist sympathizers can be persuaded against joining the Jihad. Although there may be easier methods of eliminating Islamists, this one goes directly after the recruiting process. This approach requires a concerted effort by the interagency community to achieve lasting effects. The combatant commander (CCDR) must lead this process because he holds the responsibility for security and possesses the regional expertise to provide tailoring necessary to address differences in culture and social structure.

BACKGROUND

Religion Takes Center Stage

"It is very hard to win the hearts and minds in Iraq, if you don't understand the Arab mind".
Ambassador Gordon Brown

With the fall of the Soviet Union came the loss of the bond which kept many of the unstable regions of the world in check. Once the Cold War was over, the potential for insurgencies increased because the loss of a stabilizing force in the Middle East provided an opportunity for unhindered expansion of the Islamists' agenda. In addition, the U.S.'s presence in the Middle East after Desert Storm also provided justification for a call to Jihad, Islamic holy war. Al-Qaeda's leader, Osama Bin Laden, was promoting the greater (inner) Jihad against moderate Muslim leaders. As Americas' presence in the Middle East persisted following the first Gulf War, the Islamists shifted their focus from fighting the greater Jihad to the lesser (outer) Jihad against the "occupiers" of Islamic land.

⁴ The circle of terrorism is a concept taught by the Joint Special Operations University located at Hurlburt Field, Florida. One of the exploitable links in the circle of terrorism is the ideological support base.
<<http://www.afsoc.af.mil/jsou/>>

Islamists view the colonization of the Islamic world which occurred throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a follow-up to the Crusades, designed to displace Islamic influence and power. “The 20th century was marked by two dominant themes: European colonialism and the Muslim struggle for independence. The legacy of colonialism remains alive today.”⁵ U.S. presence in Islamic lands, whether in the form of religious networks or organizations working to support human rights, has the potential to be viewed as “a modern agenda by which the West hopes to establish its hegemony over the Muslim world”.⁶ Removal of Western influence from the Middle East is an intermediate objective of the Islamists to achieve their overall strategic objective of establishing a global caliphate.⁷

ANALYSIS

“When Westerners use the term ‘secular,’ for example, Muslims hear ‘Godless,’ while what was intended is ‘freedom to worship as one pleases.’”

Douglas M. Johnston
Trumping Realpolitik: Faith Based Diplomacy, New York: Oxford University Press
2003, p. xii

America did not ask for a religious war and, correctly, has been careful not to call this a war of religions.⁸ The Islamists we are fighting adhere to a violent form of religious ideology, viewing anyone who does not accept their beliefs as the enemy. Waiting for cultures to shift and moderate political and theological thinking to replace the extreme ideology may take at least two generations. Based on previous experiences, it is unlikely the American public will have the patience to wait for our presence to be culturally accepted in

⁵ Role of Colonization on the Political System of the Muslim World.
<<http://www.islamreligion.com/articles/359/>>

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Daniel Benjamin and Steven Simon, *The Age of Sacred Terror* (New York: Random House, 2003), 70.

⁸ However, the rhetoric is becoming more controversial. Earlier this year, President Bush received much criticism from media and politicians for calling the Islamists, “religious extremists”.

the Middle East. While the U.S. and her allies suffer scrutiny for our efforts to fight this global insurgency⁹ and defeat Islamists, the enemy gains ground with its relatively unhindered freedom of recruitment. A more aggressive approach aimed at disrupting the recruitment process is necessary and can only be achieved through coordinating and synchronizing military efforts with interagency, non-governmental, and international organizations.

Operational Art

Until 9/11, Western society had viewed terrorism as a regional activity.¹⁰ The attack on the USS COLE in Yemen in 2000 was seen as a regional threat, even though al Qaeda had demonstrated their global reach capability in 1995.¹¹ The coordination, planning, and synchronization required to accomplish the 9/11 strikes revealed that the Islamists who attacked America were both organized and functioning under sound operational art criteria.¹² The Islamists' integration of unconventional warfare and informational tools such as the internet, laptops, and cell phones prompts America to reevaluate traditional methods of conducting warfare. Focusing on the hearts and minds of the people is no longer a shaping or reconstruction and stability phase operation. Hearts and minds are won across the ROMO because the operational environment has shrunk in both time and space, providing little opportunity to assess physical and psychological effects. The commander no longer has a

⁹ David J. Kilcullen, "Countering Global Insurgency," *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol.28, No.4, (August 2005), 1. This paper is in agreement with Kilcullen that the terrorist (Islamists) we are fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan are part of a global insurgency.

¹⁰ Western society is the U.S. and European democratic nations whose influence in the Muslim world Al Qaeda wants to see removed.

¹¹ Investigation revealed this was an al Qaeda attack. A rental van packed with explosive blew up in the basement parking garage of the World Trade Center.

¹² Milan Vego, *Operational Warfare* (Newport: U.S. Naval War College, 2000), 2. Operational Art is defined as "a component of military art concerned with the theory and practice of planning, preparing, conducting, and sustaining major operations and campaigns aimed at accomplishing operational or strategic objectives in a given theater".

defined period of time to shape an environment. A terrorist act can occur at any time and any place throughout the world. Our forward-leaning response has enabled some successes: we have taken the fight to the enemy, killed or removed many of their leaders, and, so far, diverted subsequent terrorist strikes in America. However, many believe the U.S. is losing the war against Islamists because their insurgency persists.

The Islamists have proved to be proficient in psychological operations and strategic communications. They are masters of disseminating misinformation to affect regional and global public opinion and draw sympathy to their cause. Propaganda is passed along in their madrassas, mosques, villages, universities, and media. To counterbalance this effect, the operational commander must continuously work to prevent the successful recruiting of sympathizers while completing the operational objective of eliminating the Islamists.

Because Muslim religious leadership has not collectively called for our presence to be accepted, coalition forces have been unsuccessful in gaining acceptance by much of the populace sympathetic to the Islamists' cause. While we have been focusing on the physical aspect of warfare, our enemy has been utilizing their knowledge of the spiritual side of warfare. As we have killed their leadership, more jihadists have risen up to fight for and lead their cause.

As is the case in all warfare, the key to defeating this insurgency is to identify and destroy the enemy's center of gravity.¹³ Operational commanders, working with allies, have been successful in attacking one of the Islamists' operational centers of gravity, the Islamists

¹³ Vego, 309. The center of gravity is "that source of massed strength – physical or moral, or a source of leverage – whose serious degradation, dislocation, neutralization, or destruction would have the most decisive impact on the enemy's or one's own ability to accomplish a given military objective."

themselves.¹⁴ However, there has been limited success with these operational successes aligning to affect the insurgency's strategic center of gravity, religious ideology.¹⁵ With all the successes in eliminating Islamists, their religious ideology has not been significantly weakened. How does the operational commander destroy an ideology? Additional focus should be applied to attacking the other operational centers of gravity, popular support and organizational support. If the sympathizer does not support or join the Islamists, then the Islamists' religious ideology line of operation is essentially cut off.

Finding the Common Ground

A Fox News Special Report aired on Sunday, August 20th 2006 entitled "Purpose Driven Life: Can Rick Warren Change the World"? The report focused on Warren, a U.S. religious leader and author of international best-seller, *The Purpose Driven Life*. Warren's idea focuses on the utilization of a worldwide network of religious groups organized to help in failed or failing states. Referencing successes from the Indonesian tsunami in 2004 where local churches were networked to create a synergistic response, he spoke of the opportunity to expand this network to other areas of the world where people suffer from disease, poverty, illiteracy and spiritual emptiness.¹⁶ Out of this vision, Warren created what he calls the P.E.A.C.E. Plan with the purpose of addressing the "five global giants" of the world's problems: spiritual emptiness, corrupt leadership, extreme poverty, pandemic disease, and illiteracy and lack of education.¹⁷ After reading Warren's book and learning about the P.E.A.C.E. plan, President Kagame of Rwanda contacted Warren and asked for Warren's

¹⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *National Military Strategic Plan for the War on Terrorism* (Washington, DC: 1 February 2006), 14. Four operational and tactical centers of gravity are listed: key leaders, popular support, organizational support and key operational elements of the organization.

¹⁵ Ibid, 14.

¹⁶ Further details of the report may be viewed on FoxNews.com.
<<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,208668,00.html>>

¹⁷ P.E.A.C.E. stands for Plant churches, Equip servant leaders, Assist the poor, Care for the sick, Educate the next generation. More information can be found at <<http://www.thepeaceplan.com>>

assistance in his country.¹⁸ The two men have developed a relationship of trust and a plan to work together to meet the health and social needs resulting from Rwanda's decade long struggle with genocide. Warren has developed a network-centric approach to effectively address the poverty and health concerns of the people of Rwanda. Is it possible for the U.S. military to access networks like this one to meet the needs of the population base from which Islamists conduct their recruiting and thereby reduce the likelihood of their being recruited by Islamists? As with the relationship between Warren and President Kagame, the operational commander's ability to influence Islamist sympathizers is dependent upon finding common ground between the two sides.

Giving alms to the poor is one of the five pillars of the Muslim faith. All the major religions have a mission to provide for the poor. Religious leaders can combine efforts and resources to provide medicine and educational opportunities. In the example of Kagame and Warren, one leader, Kagame, realized he had human rights needs he could not fulfill. So, he sought help from someone who had the resources and now they have begun to build a relationship. Working to help the poor, religious leaders from all sides of the conflict can come together to establish dialogue. This provides the opportunity for sharing of ideas and concerns with the insurgency and opens the door for understanding and reconciliation.

Common ground also exists in the fact that each of the three world religions engaged in this insurgency shares a common ancestry in Abraham. From a history of shared values, hope, and tradition, leaders from all three religions can work together to reconcile the fissure among them. Brauch states, "lasting peace and security in our present context of religiously motivated terrorism and 'civilization conflict' will only be achieved by choosing

¹⁸ President Kagame is highly respected locally and internationally for successfully fostering a stay of peace between the warring tribes in Rwanda.

reconciliation – a choice that is only sustainable when embrace is seen as theologically and spiritually legitimate to all parties.”¹⁹ Through common ground, a purpose for coming together is generated. Coming together provides opportunity for discussion, forgiveness, and reconciliation. When these religious leaders return to their homes and share what they have experienced, waging holy war should lose some of its attraction to Islamist sympathizers.

Even though the CCDR cannot make them reconcile, he can facilitate the opportunity. Moderate religious leaders are the key to reversing the alienation of Islamists. Cultural influence, conducted at the level necessary to achieve lasting effects, cannot be done by the military arm of government, especially Western governments. The U.S. aggressively trains its Special Forces and interagency personnel in the culture and language of selected countries. However, the results have not been completely successful. Al-Qaeda continues to alienate the West and garner support because of lack of intervention by moderate Muslims in the region. Although it is extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of religious influences, the cost to the government of incorporating such methods can be measured. Assets, training, loss of life, and public support all possess measurable qualities.

The regional insurgency in Iraq and Afghanistan is an organized operational campaign being carried out by AQAM as part of its global insurgency to remove Western presence and influence from Islamic lands.²⁰ Insurgents are recruited to support the Islamists’ cause.²¹ Several means are used such as the internet, colleges and universities, and madrassas. The long-term problem created by not addressing the Islamist religious

¹⁹ Manfred T. Brauch, “Choosing Exclusion of Embrace: An Abrahamic Theological Perspective” in *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations* ed. Robert A. Seiple and Dennis R. Hoover (Lanham: Maryland, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2004), 62.

²⁰ Kilcullen, 1.

²¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Pub 1-02 (Washington, DC: 8 August 2006), 269. An insurgency is “an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict.”

ideology are tactical events focused on the individual that will not win at the operational or strategic level. When a leader is killed, he is seen as a martyr by his subordinates and someone else assumes the vacant role. Until the ideology is changed through a more robust theater-specific strategy, the war will persist.

The critical vulnerability of Islamist ideology is not with the terrorist themselves. Directly targeting Islamists independent of understanding the Islamist sympathizers' reactions has proven to be the less than optimum approach to winning hearts and minds. In order to have a beneficial effect on the motivations of an Islamist sympathizer, a comprehensive approach is more effective. The operational objective should be developing relationships with moderate Muslim leaders who have the access and ability to influence the Islamists. Leveraging knowledge gained from these discussions, the CDR can better understand the societal response following an attack against Islamists. Due to cultural and current political differences, dialogue between Muslims who are from the same city, tribe, or family has a greater chance of changing religious convictions of Islamist sympathizers than dialogue between a Western Muslim and an Islamist.

Implementation

“Religious representatives need to exercise their moral authority and mobilize the vast human resources of their communities in the service of peacemaking.”

President Jimmy Carter

Some issues must be addressed when discussing a more aggressive operation to convince the sympathizers to reject the Islamists ideology. The first is legality. Although there is no international law forbidding persons from discussing religious issues, the perception generated by covertly engaging with religious leaders may put the individuals

involved at great personal risk. Article 18 of the United Nations Declaration of Human rights states that “everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”²² This declaration implies that discussion concerning religion is acceptable because the right to change ones religion is protected.

The second concern is that of morality. Morality in military conduct of war is considered in the context of the use of violence. Religion on the offensive is not violent, though it is forceful.²³ For the Islamists, there is no moral dilemma. They have declared holy war against unbelievers and this makes it morally justified. For the religious leaders necessary to conduct dialogue to affect the Islamist sympathizers, the question of morality may exist. Asking a religious leader to attempt to change the religious convictions of Islamist sympathizers in direct assistance to the CCDR would provide a moral dilemma difficult to justify and potentially jeopardize the religious leader’s non-combatant role. Consequently, these religious leaders cannot work directly for the military. In addition, the just war theory is utilized to provide legitimacy to our efforts.²⁴ As long as the Islamists continue to target innocent civilians, they enable us to maintain this “moral high ground.” Utilizing leadership across religions to influence Islamist sympathizers must be viewed by involved parties and the rest of the world as having the right intention.

²² United Nations, "Universal Declaration of Human Rights", accessed 5 Oct 2006.
<<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>>.

²³ Terry Nardin, “The Comparative Ethics of War and Peace” ed. Terry Nardin, *The Ethics of War and Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 259.

²⁴ Just War Theory is derived from the Latin term *jus ad bellum* or “right to war” which states that a Just War must meet the following criteria: comparative justice, legitimate authority, right intention, probability of success, proportionality, and last resort.

In addition to the inherent personal risks to religious leaders, there is political risk in aggressively taking steps to counter Islamists' efforts to influence fundamental Muslims to support their ideology. Operations directed to intentionally gain understanding and acceptance of Western presence by the Islamist sympathizers should be transparent. Without transparency, the political risk for the U.S. may be too great. Dialogue should be done in such a way that Muslims see sincere people and not Christians or Jews attempting to convert them. For this reason, initial dialogue may be best engaged in a group setting as opposed to one-on-one interactions. Relationships created at these meetings can form the foundation required for acceptable ongoing dialogue. Encouraging religious organizational support through dedicated programs where multiple religions are represented will help reduce these risks.

To maintain legitimacy, religious organizations must operate independent of governmental interference. A religious organization which has built its relationships in a community has made a large investment of time and money. If competing religious or political agencies in the area believe that the religious organization is an attempt by the U.S. to gain a stronghold in the region, the safety of the people and foundation for legitimate hope will be disrupted. Legitimate religious organizations operate in a chosen area based on the direction of their leadership in the sincere belief they are operating in the location God has called them to work. If any believe the faith-based organization was operating for or with the military, the organization's non-combatant status would be in jeopardy.

To align the strategic and operations levels in promoting dialogue, it is imperative to locate indigenous religious leaders among the moderate Muslim community who have the motivation and courage to seek peaceful solutions. This takes the U.S. government's

involvement at the strategic level to promote these forums. One of the newest and most promising U.S. security enhancement initiatives is the creation of the Africa Center for Security Studies (ACSS). This innovative program, inaugurated in Senegal in 2005, brings together civilian and military leaders from all over Africa for two weeks of seminars taught by U.S. and African experts on civil-military relations, national security strategy, and defense economics. The extremely enthusiastic African responses to the inaugural program in which forty-three African countries were represented gives reason to believe the seminars will play a key role in shaping the African security environment.²⁵

On 19 January 2001, President Bush signed Executive Order 13199 establishing the Office of Faith-Based Diplomacy and Community Initiative (OFBCI).²⁶ The practice of Faith-Based Diplomacy has the ability to bridge cultural and religious gaps. Extending the model of President Bush's Faith-Based and Political Initiatives to the international stage could provide political backing and legitimacy to Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The Combatant Commander's role

Does the operational commander possess the ability to synchronize his military attacks with ideological targeting efforts in order to achieve desired effects? What tools does the operational commander need in order to synchronize these effects? Is it possible to win the hearts and minds if military kinetic action is involved? In fighting the Islamists global insurgency, the CCDR must work diligently with the Chief of Missions to accurately assess and shape the operational environment in order to understand the impact operations may

²⁵ Africa Center for Strategic Studies website.

<http://www.africacenter.org/Dev2Go.web?Anchor=ACSS_about&rnd=11422>

²⁶ The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

<<http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/executive-orders.html>>

have on the Islamist sympathizers. The CCDR relies, in part, on religious information to make his military operation successful. The knowledge of the religious climate and ongoing religious dialogue in his area of responsibility is critical to successful operational outcomes to tactical strikes, especially when those tactical strikes are targeting Islamist leadership. Understanding the probable reaction by the local populace enables the commander's staff to plan for successful contingency operations.

The Operational Art of combating this approach of countering this insurgency is balancing religious influence over targeted areas of Islamic society while simultaneously understanding the impact tactical events have on the overall theater-strategic objective. Because of different religious beliefs in different regions, the specific plan will vary between CCDRS and among the regions in his theater of operations.

The CCDR is responsible for planning and implementation of regional and theater military strategies that require interagency coordination.²⁷ The U.S. interagency process plays a critical role in the success of religious operations. Timing and synchronization of actions to achieve the desired effects are critical. For example, if a moderate Muslim leader is purposely engaging an Islamist sympathizer to discuss religious beliefs, shaping of the environment must have already occurred. The sympathizer should have been conditioned to receive the message from the moderate. This may be achieved through use of Information Operations or Psychological Operations or both. Strategic Communications also plays a role in setting the conditions for the sympathizer to have an open mind for discourse.

In order to achieve the synergistic desired effects, the CCDR must coordinate with ambassadors or Chiefs of Mission and country teams in his area of responsibility. The

²⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization, and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations Vol. I*, Joint Pub 3-08 (Washington, DC: 17 March 2006), II-14.

CCDR can utilize his scheduled meetings with the ambassador to ascertain the religious climate in his area of concern. By working through the ambassador's office, the CCDR can maintain a level of separation between himself and the indigenous religious leadership to minimize the risk of the religious leader being seen as a conspirator with a foreign military.

The best asset the CCDR has on his staff in support of this effort is his chaplain. The first responsibility of a chaplain is to provide religious support. However, this support is limited to an advisory role in order to preserve the chaplain's non-combatant status under the Geneva Convention.²⁸ Chaplains and other service members operating under the CCDR's Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) afford an opportunity to maintain on-going dialogue and to build upon the foundations generated at community meetings. Prioritizing and synchronizing TSCP activities and capabilities that support campaigns against the Islamists are essential to creating an environment conducive for building relations between the West and the Middle East. TSCP programs are generally broad-based and by their nature only influence the periphery. More fidelity must be incorporated to align TSCP with regional religious goals of reconciliation and acceptance. While TSCP contacts have a positive impact, they are not enough to generate the widespread acceptance of Western presence in the area.

CONCLUSION

For many in the U.S., religion has been viewed as a personal right which has been kept separate from discussions concerning military operations. Unlike the threats our republic has faced since she began, today's conflicts are religiously motivated. It is time to

²⁸ Phillip Gwaltney, Telephone interview, 13 September 2006. CAPT Gwaltney recently returned from a tour as the Command Chaplain for Commander Central Command.

move from being religiously and culturally aware to pursue methods to sway the Islamist sympathizers to a tolerant position. Cultural sensitivity training in the military is just the beginning and while it has some impact, the benefits take too long and have accomplished little to alter the course of conflict while answering to political pressure to bring our troops home. Understanding the power religion plays in the decision making process to join this insurgency is just one factor in formulating a plan to defeat Islamists and win the war on terrorism. No one factor holds the key. Culture, ethnicity, language, history, social structure, national pride, will, and politics are all factors requiring constant attention. Only through concerted effort and sincere empathy can any dialogue between the religiously divided societies continue. It is through this dialogue that common ground is found and religious differences can be put aside to further the benefit of all involved and bring stability to the Middle East.

The crux of this meshing of efforts is held with the CCDR. The CCDR traditionally handles this overlapping of military responsibilities and assigned political engagements very well. The Theater Security Cooperation Program has gone a long way in developing military relationships in the theater. However, the results our national leaders envisioned have not yet been achieved. We are still attempting to win the hearts and minds of the populace in the countries in which we are engaged. We have been averse to dealing with religious beliefs and even find it difficult to include any religious comment in our speech. It is time for a paradigm shift when it comes to dealing with actors who make military decisions based on religious ideology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made in order to provide alignment across the national-strategic and theater-strategic objectives previously discussed.

1. **Establish a formal global religious leader outreach program to indirectly provide operational support to the CCDR.** This will provide legitimacy and encourage religious leaders, especially moderate Muslims, to participate. For example, the United States Institute for Peace (USIP) works with NGOs and faith-based organizations by offering a forum for discussion through workshops and literature. In 1992 and again in 2002, USIP held workshops to determine if there is incompatibility between Islam and democratic principles. These workshops have led to increased understanding and have served to alleviate cultural misperceptions.
2. **Develop relationships between ambassadors and host nation religious leadership.** This fosters relationships and dialogue the CCDR can utilize for planning operations which will not be detrimental to the local religious leader's efforts or safety.
3. **Add to operational doctrine religious assessment criteria to ascertain the possible impact an operation may have on the religious climate.** Without a robust planning effort to help determine the consequences military action may have on the Islamist sympathizers' response, each military action may help further the Islamists' cause by creating more supporters of the insurgency.
4. **Add religious support to the SOCOM's staff.** Since being assigned the lead role in combating the war against terrorism, Special Operations Command (SOCOM) created the Joint Special Operations Center (JSOC) to focus on this new responsibility. The JSOC should further consider the religious climate before

executing a mission that could disrupt progress towards weakening the ideological center of gravity. This would be assisted by assigning religious expert(s) to the command to help with the overall planning effort. These results could then be forwarded to the Joint Psychological Operations Support Element (JPSE) resident at SOCOM for further operational planning considerations.

5. **CCDR reach back to SOCOM staff.** To save on costs, instead of assigning additional personnel to the CCDR, provide a reach back capability for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) and operational planners to access at SOCOM to ensure regional religious considerations are aligned with SOCOMS overall objectives for the war on terror.
6. **Expand the TSCP program.** Consciously align the missions of the TSCP to complement efforts being made at the formal religious leadership meetings in the operational environment.
7. **Add religious awareness instruction to the military educational system.** Because military operations are becoming more and more engaged with the indigenous population, religious indoctrination of the environment needs to be emphasized as much as cultural awareness and language.

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